

Hidden Gems of Southeastern South Dakota

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Sweep-Van Dyke Hotel

Plankinton, Aurora County

The Sweep-Van Dyke Hotel is a clapboard frame building built around 1900 to serve visitors, itinerant workers, and new residents brought to town by the railroad. Such hotels generated revenue for their towns and provided space for traveling salesmen to demonstrate their products. Their restaurants and lobbies were social spaces to exchange news, meet friends and family, and host gatherings. Ella and George Sweep bought this hotel in 1906 and ran it until 1920. Afterwards, although railroad travel was declining, it continued on into the 1970s as a hotel and as a boarding house. See <http://plankinton.com/bizdir/businesses/sweepotel.htm> for more information on the restoration effort including the reconstructed porch shown here.



ZCBJ Hall

Tyndall, Bon Homme County

The ZCBJ Hall is a deceptively simple wood frame building, but between 1908 and 1950 it served the Czech community as a social center and as a hall for the Zdpadni ceskd bratrskd jednota (Western Czech/Bohemian Fraternal Order, founded 1897). The hall hosted band concerts, plays, meetings, and even held school classes after a 1929 fire burned the Tyndall school. Fraternal orders were incredibly important during the early twentieth century. They provided socialization, cultural continuity, as well as societal order. They also provided welfare like insurance or funeral costs for those who had left behind the support of their extended families for new western states. The ZCBJ Hall is located at Nebraska and Washington Streets in Tyndall, but is privately owned. The Czech community in South Dakota is still active, holding their Czech Days in Tabor each summer.



Chamberlain Bridge

Chamberlain, Brule County

In the 1920s, during the Good Roads movement, South Dakota funded the construction of bridges over the Missouri River to serve an increasing number of automobiles. Bridge height requirements of the Flood Control Act of 1944, which created the Upper Missouri River's dam system, led to the replacement of existing bridge systems with taller ones. In 1925, the Missouri Valley Bridge & Iron Works built one bridge at Chamberlain and the Kansas City Bridge Company built one at Wheeler. In 1953, the State Highway Commission combined these two earlier bridges at Chamberlain using a superstructure designed with Pennsylvania through trusses. Connections across the Missouri River have been essential for South Dakota as a state, and this bridge is particularly important to life in the river towns of Chamberlain and Oacoma.



O.G. Bradshaw Elevator

Kimball, Brule County

From 1908 to his death in 1956, O.G. Bradshaw operated this 20,000-bushel grain elevator along the railroad siding at Kimball (off Railroad Street). His independent elevator, with those of the line company and the co-operative, provided thousands of area farmers with access through the Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul railroad line at Kimball to national markets for their grain and other products. The Bradshaw Elevator is a forty-eight foot frame building that has an attached drive bay and office, and its nine bins used the strong and flexible "cribbed" construction of laying boards flat on top of each other and pinning them on the ends. It is also significant because it did not undergo many of the common 1930s modernizations like steel siding or shortened eaves.



Big Bend Dam

Fort Thompson, Buffalo County

Big Bend Dam at Fort Thompson was started in 1959 and finished in July 1963 as the last of five Army Corps of Engineers dams on the upper Missouri River, which Congress authorized through the Flood Control Act of 1944. The dams project was motivated by the desire to use the power of the river for transportation, irrigation, hydroelectric generation, flood control, and recreation. Big Bend Dam is ninety-five feet high, 10,570 feet long, and is named for a twenty-five mile bend in the river located seven miles upstream. Its construction and the creation of Lake Sharpe that amassed behind the dam meant dislocation and the loss of plant and land resources for many families on the Crow Creek Reservation. Highway 47 crosses the dam at Fort Thompson, and around Lake Sharpe there are nineteen recreation areas open to the public. Learn more at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/projects.cfm?id=G601420> or call (605) 245-2255.



Greenwood Presbyterian Church

Greenwood, Charles Mix County

Greenwood was established along the Missouri River as a federal Indian agency for the Ihanktonwan (Yankton) Sioux tribal reservation by the Treaty of 1858. Missions to the reservations were part of the activity of most mainline Protestant denominations during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The federal government supported religious missions as an element of an overall assimilation policy. The Presbyterian congregation on the Yankton reservation was organized in 1871 by the Reverend John P. Williamson. This brick Gothic church was likely built later in the early twentieth century. Most buildings associated with the Yankton Agency at Greenwood have been lost. Greenwood is well hidden down county roads, along the Missouri River, about sixteen miles south and west of Wagner, we recommend mapping the route before you visit.



Severson Cabin

North of Vermillion, Clay County

The Severson Cabin (also known as Rice Farm) is located in rural Clay County, South Dakota. It was built by Inglebrit Severson on his 1869 homestead claim using dovetail notching. The cabin was lined with newspapers, some dating to 1870-71 and some printed in Norwegian. Scandinavian features of its construction include the squared logs that also make up the gable ends. Its prominent front dormers and limestone foundation are likely later additions that show the continued use of the home beyond the settlement period. It is visible on the eastern side of Bluff Road—take Highway 19 north and turn west on Bluff Road, following the ridge. Also, look west for a wonderful view of the Missouri River Valley.



Austin-Whittemore House

Vermillion, Clay County

In 1881, a disastrous Missouri River flood forced residents in Vermillion to rebuild their community on the nearby bluff. The Austin-Whittemore House was built on the bluff in 1883 by surveyor Horace J. Austin and his wife Rachel who was a teacher. Its architecture has an Italian Villa style with square cupola, paired cornice brackets, tall windows with stone hoods, and full-width porch. In 1968, Horace and Rachel's daughter, Mrs. A.H. Whittemore passed away and the house was in jeopardy. A group came together to preserve the house and they formed the Clay County Historical Society. They continue to preserve the building, its collections, and the history of the county. For more information on visiting the museum, visit: <http://www.southdakotabeautiful.com/southeast-south-dakota-tourism/145-austin-whittemore-house-museum-vermillion-sd.html>.



Van den Hoek Schoolhouse

Harrison, Douglas County

The Van den Hoek Schoolhouse (Holland School District No. 3) was built around 1890 for the rural residents in this Dutch area of Douglas County. In the 1920s, as larger schools were being built, it was moved three miles west and one-and-a-half miles south into the town of Harrison where it continued to serve the community as a township hall and voting place until 1969. In 1982, the Happy Homemakers Extension Club converted the building into a museum for Harrison's centennial, using materials donated by community members. It still has its clapboard siding, beadboard wall cladding, wood sash windows, outhouses/coal shed in back, and the bell from the second Harrison school. The schoolhouse is located on Main Street in Harrison, three miles west of Corsica on Highway 560/273rd Street.



St. Peter's Grotto

Farmer, Hanson County

St. Peter's Grotto was built in Farmer, a German-Catholic area, by Father Peter N. Scheier between 1926 and 1933. It was designed using Byzantine and other architectural styles, using stones Father Scheier collected on trips to the Black Hills, petrified wood from North Dakota, abalone shells from Hawaii, marble from Tennessee, and a rock from the Calista Catacombs in Rome. Unattended after 1959, the grotto went through restoration in 2001. It is considered a rare and significant example of folk art in the religious history of South Dakota, and is located off Joe Street, a half-mile north of the Chicago and North Western Railroad Tracks.



Shakespeare Garden and Shay House

Wessington Springs, Jerauld County

(photo courtesy of South Dakota Tourism)

In 1927, Mrs. Emma Shay began this garden after returning from a trip to England to her job as an English professor at the Wessington Springs Methodist Seminary. In 1932, the Shays used a picture postcard to build a partial replica of Anne Hathaway's cottage, "Shottery", in Stratford-upon-Avon. In 1989, during the state's centennial, the community established the Shakespeare Garden Society to restore the cottage and gardens, including hiring and English-trained craftsman to thatch the roof. The house is open during summer afternoons or by appointment, and the gardens are open during daylight hours. When entering Wessington Springs go north on Dakota Avenue to 6th Street, three blocks to the west, and south for one block. Go to <http://shakespearegarden.blogspot.com/> or call 605-539-1529 for more information.



Chapel Car Emmanuel

Madison, Lake County

The Chapel Car Emmanuel is one of only three Baptist chapel cars left in existence. Reverend Boston Smith had the idea to send out mission churches on wheels using the expanding railroad network to travel between small western communities. From 1891 to 1915, the Barney and Smith Car Company in Dayton, Ohio built seven train cars for the American Baptist Publication Society. The second, "Emmanuel," traveled the Burlington Northern Railroad from 1893 to 1942. It has a solid oak interior and catalpa wood exterior. After 1942, it was used for a decade or so at a Baptist camp near Swan Lake, South Dakota. Since 1972, it has sat at Prairie Village west of Madison, and restoration efforts are ongoing. See <http://www.prairievillage.org/> for more information on visiting.



Herman Luce Cabin

Madison, Lake County

Visitors to Lake Herman State Park west of Madison can also see the Herman Luce log cabin, built out of hewn oak logs over a stone cellar. In the summer of 1871, Luce had the cabin built on this site as his family's residence, but it also served as a post office and land office during this territorial period. The village of Herman that grew up around the cabin (platted in 1875) was abandoned when the railroad passed instead through Madison in 1881, but the cabin continued to be occupied

until 1941 when the state park was established. See <http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/lake-herman/> or call (605) 256-5003 for visitor information.



McCook County Courthouse

Salem, McCook County

The McCook County Courthouse is a highly characteristic Art Deco building designed by architects Kings & Dixon out of Mitchell, who were prolific in the region during the 1920s and 30s, and built in 1934 with some involvement by the New Deal's Public Works Administration. Kings & Dixon's work for this and other Art Deco courthouses in Davison, Aurora, and Miner Counties followed the international movement to combine traditional building forms with features of the futuristic machine age. Art Deco can be seen in the geometric motifs in concrete, vertical emphasis, terrazzo flooring, marble door surrounds, and the abundant use of polished aluminum and chrome for accent panels on the façade, railings, doorways, heating grills, and lighting fixtures. The courthouse can be visited on its landscaped square off Essex Avenue in Salem.



Howard Elevator

Howard, Miner County

The Farmers Cooperative Association grain elevator in Howard was originally constructed around 1905 and is the last remaining of five elevators that were operating in Howard around 1931. It has the common triangular cupola and timber frame construction. During the early twentieth century, Farmers cooperative elevators provided important options for area farmers that were concerned about railroad-affiliated elevator companies having a monopoly on access to trade markets. The Howard elevator was likely “modernized” around the 1930s with metal wall cladding, shortened eaves, and a metal roof. Additional bins, a warehouse, and accessory structures have been added over time as the elevator complex continues to operate. It is located south of Market Avenue in Howard.



Palisades Bridge

Garretson, Minnehaha County

In 1908, the bridge now located within Palisades State Park was built by the Western Bridge and Construction Company using steel, wood, a granite foundation, and a Pratt Pin connected Through Truss structural system. It crosses at a height of forty feet over Split Rock Creek and provides park visitors access to walks and picnic space on the northwestern side of the creek. It replaced an earlier 1883 bridge that C.W. Patten had built to encourage trade with his water-powered flour mill and the town of Palisades—now vanished. Palisades State Park is located near Garretson, and it is easy to follow the characteristic brown signs from I-90. Go to <http://gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/palisades/> for more information on visiting.



Sioux Quartzite

Dell Rapids, Minnehaha County

Sioux quartzite is an incredibly durable, purple-pink-red stone found in a vein through southeastern South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. Dell Rapids' most significant industry—quartzite mining—began in the early 1870s, only a few years after the first farmer settled there in 1868. By 1886, there were 300 men in Dell Rapids employed by several quarry companies. An 1888 fire in downtown Dell Rapids destroyed wooden buildings that were replaced with an impressive collection of quartzite commercial buildings supplied by local quarries. Drive around Dell Rapids and you will find quartzite everywhere—the



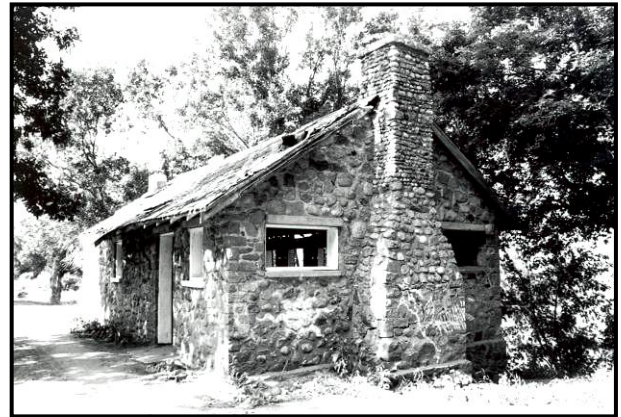
1930s park amphitheater on the western end of Third Street, the 1894 Old Stone Water Tower on 10th and Orleans Streets, the entrance gate of the Dell Rapids Cemetery north of town on 15th Street, and many other buildings. There is also a scenic walking trail leading from the city park along the Big Sioux River and The Dells. Go to <http://www.cityofdellrapids.org/> for more information.



Egan Park

Egan, Moody County

In 1933, the Public Works Administration—a New Deal work relief program—helped fund the construction of amenities at the city park in Egan. Since the turn-of-the-century, this riverside location had been a popular gathering place for residents and it had been acquired by the city in 1925. New Deal workmanship around South Dakota is notable for its use of stone in construction—just like that used for the Egan Park bathhouse, picnic tables, and privy. In 1959, a local sportsman club converted the bathhouse for their use. The park is located on the east end of town where Second Street meets the Big Sioux River.



St. Wilfred Catholic Church

Woonsocket, Sanborn County

St. Wilfred Catholic Church is a large Romanesque Revival brick church on 2nd Avenue in Woonsocket. Though construction of this—the parish's second church building—began in 1914, World War I delayed its completion until 1920. It was common for older congregations to build their second buildings during the economically healthy period of the 1910s and early 1920s, using more substantial materials and elaborate architectural styles. The front entrance of St. Wilfred's and other portions of the building's exterior feature elaborate brickwork. The monumental sanctuary features arcaded side aisles, stained glass, and domed apse. Visit <http://www.santel.net/~stwilfrid/> for more information.



SD Air National Guard Armory/City Auditorium

Elk Point, Union County

This South Dakota Air National Guard Armory/City Auditorium was built from 1941 to 1943 using funds from the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. This solid concrete building has housed the fire department, City Council, public library, VFW, American Legion, and a large auditorium. After a fire in 1958, the community quickly restored the damaged interior. It uses a simplified version of Art Deco architecture that can be seen in the lettering style of "Auditorium" at the top of the façade, the fluted blocks helping to create a vertical emphasis, and lighting fixtures on either side of the entrance. It is located on the north side of Main Street in Elk Point.



Mead Building

Yankton, Yankton County

The Mead Building, part of the Human Services Center, was built in 1909 as the administration building for the South Dakota Hospital for the Insane. The building has an Italian tile roof, a stone arcade wrapping around the façade, and a grand marble staircase in the entry. It is named for Dr. Leonard C. Mead who promoted the use of beautiful grounds and buildings as a serene environment for the treatment of the mentally ill. He influenced the creation of careful landscaping and many of the classicist designs and detailing of the buildings. The campus as a whole features historic buildings built from 1886 to 1942 using high-style architecture and materials like marble and Sioux quartzite. Work is ongoing to find a feasible adaptive use for this monumental building northwest of Yankton.



Dakota Theater

Yankton, Yankton County

This colorful 1950 Art Deco/Moderne façade is the creation of Clayton Christopherson and uses chrome, ribbed glass panels, and porcelain enamel panels. Originally built as an opera house in 1902, it was converted into a movie theater in the 1920s and showed its first talking picture in 1929. Christopherson not only designed the façade but painted murals on the interior walls between 1946 and 1948. He owned a graphics company and also designed a number of houses around Yankton. The movie theater closed in 1987, but a non-profit, Dakota Theatre Inc., hosted its grand re-opening in 1993 and continues the restoration work. The theater is located at 328 Walnut Street, just north of the main downtown commercial street.

